

**AGENDA ITEM III A 2**

**PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

**GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY**

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING - PEDIATRIC NURSE  
PRACTITIONER**

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##### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

At its meeting of December 2005, the Board of Regents acted as follows:

**Conditional approval for the proposed Letter of Intent for a projected M.S. in Nursing - Pediatric Nurse Practitioner program at Grambling State University. Any option proposal forthcoming as a result of this Letter of Intent shall specifically address:**

- a.. need for additional trained professionals in this area of nursing expertise;**
- b. insufficient enrollment capacity of and graduate production by Northwestern State University's existing similar option; and**
- c. adequate and sustained state/external funding needed for the initial five-years of option operation.**

**Upon submittal of an option proposal, the staff shall engage the services of appropriately qualified external consultants to assess the prospective quality of and need for the proposed option.**

The proposal for the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP) option within the Master of Science in Nursing at Grambling State University (GSU) was approved by the University of Louisiana System in February 2008. Additional information, requested in March and May 2008, was received in May and July 2008.

Because all necessary resources for the PNP program are presently available and because the University has already achieved mandatory specialized accreditation by the National League of Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC), it was decided that the external review initially stipulated was unnecessary.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

### **1. Description**

GSU proposes the addition of a PNP option within its existing graduate nursing program. Currently, the Master of Science in Nursing offers two programs of study: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) or Nurse Educator (NE). With appropriate academic preparation, PNP graduates will be qualified to seek national certification and advanced practice nursing licensure to provide primary health care for pediatric patients in rural and under-served populations. Graduates of the PNP program will be able to provide more specialized care for infants, toddlers, school children and adolescents in pediatric clinics, private pediatric practices, school based health clinics, Kid Med programs and related pediatric care programs.

Twenty-nine hours for the proposed new option are existing courses in the FNP program. The PNP curriculum will require the development of only four new courses (twenty-one hours). PNP courses would be offered once per year. The program includes four semesters plus one summer of didactic and clinical courses totaling fifty semester credit hours.

### **2. Need**

There is an existing PNP program at Northwestern State University (NWSU). While the institution is located in Natchitoches, the PNP program utilizes clinical facilities in Shreveport. Both Shreveport and Natchitoches are approximately seventy miles from Grambling. Additionally, the LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans recently converted its Parent-Child Health Nursing to a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner program, which shares areas of expertise with PNP.

Despite the stipulations in the Letter of Intent action for the PNP program at Grambling and repeated staff requests, no specific evidence of need for additional trained professionals in this specialty nursing area nor oversupply of qualified applicants for the PNP program at NWSU were provided. However, GSU provides the following rationale:

*Some years ago when the rationale was being developed to establish the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia, the focus was not on vacancies for doctors since such data were not available, but on the existence of a large number of medically underserved communities. In considering medical services available for children in the northern part of the state, we have developed a similar argument.*

Establishment of a PNP specialty within the MSN program at Grambling was supported by documents from area administrators or health providers. GSU states in its proposal that nurse surveys show a strong interest in a PNP program in the area, that pediatricians surveyed have expressed the desire for nurse practitioners prepared to assist them in their growing practices and that there is a growing trend for utilization of PNP in school-based health clinics across the northern parishes of the state.

At the request of Academic Affairs staff, application and enrollment information to the PNP

program was provided by Northwestern, indicating that all interested applicants who are qualified for the PNP program have been admitted with the exception of 2006 when there was a shortage of one faculty. There were no applicants for the PNP program in 2003. NWSU reports twenty-seven PNP graduates from 2000 through 2008, for an annual average of 3.375.

[Staff note: Thirteen current NWSU students have designated PNP option. Five are expected to graduate in Spring 2009; eight are expected to graduate in Spring 2010.]

From the proposal:

*In an assessment of current educational needs for graduate nursing education, there was significant interest in a pediatric nurse practitioner program. Generally the family nurse practitioner program is the most popular program of study in a needs assessment, and it continues to be reflected in the most recent assessment. When nurses and employers were asked to select specialty areas for advanced practice, family was rated highest, and pediatrics was the second highest specialty area of choice. Employers indicated that the job market was in need of advanced practice nurses for pediatric populations.*

*Louisiana health care statistics indicate a significant need for increased primary health care providers to provide health promotion and disease prevention for pediatric patients in the state. For the past 14 years, Louisiana has ranked 50<sup>th</sup> in state health rankings by the United Health Foundation. Only in 2003 did Louisiana rise to the ranking of 49<sup>th</sup>, second only to Mississippi for the worst state rankings for pediatric health care. In 2004 Louisiana returned to the former 50<sup>th</sup> ranking position. The study showed a strength in Louisiana's efforts to increase prenatal visits, now available to 79.2% of all pregnant women.*

*Areas of despair in regard to pediatric health rankings include:*

*Louisiana ranks in bottom five states in the following areas:*

- a high prevalence of smoking (20.6%)*
- a high percentage of children in poverty (25.5%)*
- a high rate of cancer deaths (224.2/100,000)*
- a high infant mortality rates (9.7 per 1,000 live births)*
- a high premature death rate (10.279 years lost before age 75/100,000)*

*Louisiana ranks in bottom ten states in these areas:*

- a high rate of motor vehicle deaths for children and adolescents*
- a low high school graduation completion rate*
- a high violent crime rate*
- a high incidence of infectious diseases*

*In review of the Primary Care Service Areas (PCSA) for Louisiana cities, of the 111 cities surveyed, 53 of these had no pediatricians available. In northeast Louisiana there were 29 PCSA, only 10 of these areas had pediatricians available. The national child per pediatrician case load is 1,769, in Louisiana this case load is 1,994 per pediatrician. In the 29 PCSA in northeast Louisiana the case load exceeds the state average in 9 of 19*

*PCSA cities. Pediatric subspecialists were only available in two of the 29 PCSA cities, then only a total of 3 subspecialists were available in these two areas (Ruston and Monroe). Statewide, there are 149 pediatric subspecialists available, mostly located in New Orleans (n = 52), Metairie (n = 19), Baton Rouge (n = 9), and Shreveport (n = 20).*

*The median household income nationally was cited as \$41,994. in Louisiana the median was \$32,556. In the 29 PCSA areas in northeast Louisiana 28 of the 29 areas have median household incomes lower than the state average. (Louisiana Health Care Report, 2003). This data is displayed in the chart included in the Appendix. Clearly northeast Louisiana children have less access to pediatric health care, and many are living in homes with significantly low incomes levels. There is a significant need for primary health care providers in the northeast portion of Louisiana.*

*The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) has issued a position statement regarding pediatric health care encouraging health educational programs which focus on the health promotion of children and adolescents. Access to care continues to be a primary health care issue for the nation's children. NAPNAP cites significant problems in low-income, minority and uninsured populations. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) identified a critical goal for that agency was to improve outcomes, quality, and access to health care for the nation's 70 million children and adolescents. AHRQ noted that nearly 11 million U.S. children under the age of 18 years are uninsured, many from low-income and minority households. Children and adolescents incur \$95 billion a year in health care costs.*

### **3. Students**

Initially, students would be admitted into the program every other fall semester, which the institution suggests would accommodate anticipated demand. GSU provides the projections which follow. No rationale for projections was provided, nor was there any documentation validating student interest in the program.

<u>Semester/Year</u>	<u>New PNP Students</u>	<u>PNP Graduates</u>
Fall 2008	5	0
Fall 2009	0	0
Spring 2010	0	5
Fall 2010	5	0
Fall 2011	6	0
Spring 2012	0	5
Fall 2012	8	0

To be eligible for admission to the School of Graduate Studies at GSU, students must have a minimum undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Candidates are required to submit three letters of recommendation and are interviewed by graduate program faculty.

Enrollment in the related FNP program between AY 2002-03 and 2006-07 has totaled seventy-

four students with fifty-four graduates, averaging approximately ten grads per year.

#### **4. Faculty**

Four of the graduate nursing program faculty are credentialed for pediatric practice; they will be responsible for the four new courses. The only additional faculty required are for clinical preceptors for students enrolled in the PNP option. Individuals at clinical sites in Monroe, Ruston, Bastrop, Tallulah and Lake Providence, the only areas in northeast Louisiana who have certified pediatricians currently in practice, have agreed to serve as preceptors for students enrolled in GSU's PNP program.

#### **5. Library**

The large number of holdings related to nursing and health care in A.C. Lewis Memorial Library at GSU will support development of the PNP program. Current resources as well as available on-line access and interlibrary loans are adequate for program implementation. The institution reports that nursing students have utilized the library resources available through the LSU health services facilities in Monroe, the University of Louisiana at Monroe and at the Shreveport campus for Northwestern.

#### **6. Facilities & Equipment**

The School of Nursing (SoN) building is a two-story building with seven classrooms shared amiable by the BSN and MSN programs. Most MSN classes are offered on Fridays when the BSN students are not in the classrooms. Twenty of the forty-eight offices are assigned to nursing personnel. Two classrooms, a computer laboratory and a resource room are dedicated to graduate students. All necessary equipment and materials are present, such as state-of-the-art teaching models, clinical software programs, journals and texts and clinical diagnostic equipment for teaching advanced practice nursing skills.

#### **7. Administration**

The MSN Program Director is responsible for day-to-day operations and budgetary oversight. The Director in turn reports to the Associate Dean for the School of Nursing, who reports to the Dean of the College of Professional Studies. No changes in the present administrative structure are anticipated if the PNP program is implemented.

#### **8. Accreditation**

The Master of Science in Nursing at GSU was initially accredited by the NLNAC in 1999 with full accreditation for five years, the maximum first time accreditation period. It was reviewed with the BSN program in 2004 and again received full accreditation for a period of eight years. The next accreditation visit will be in 2012, when both the BSN and MSN programs will be evaluated, at which time the PNP option will be part of the assessment. No additional costs will be incurred, as the expenses of NLNAC re-accreditation and annual maintenance were already part of the School of Nursing's long term budget.

The Louisiana State Board of Nursing also conducts on-site visits at the SoN at five year intervals. BSN and MSN programs are assessed, as both prepare students for initial or advanced practice licensure. Costs of these visits are also factored into the SoN budget and will not increase if the PNP program is included.

## **9. Costs**

Because no additional expenses will be incurred to offer the proposed PNP program, no budget is required. All costs of offering the program are part of or will be absorbed by the SoN budget at GSU.

### **STAFF SUMMARY**

The issue of interest in and need for another PNP program in north Louisiana remains a concern. Grambling's argument focuses on perceived need by comparison of national/regional statistics, rather than actual vacant positions either in practice or in the other PNP program at Northwestern. Usually such an approach would not be considered valid by staff, but the stark reality of large underserved populations, particularly children and the elderly, in rural north Louisiana suggest that this may be indeed a case where "if we build it, they will come." A critical factor will be, however, whether graduates of this program become employed in Louisiana or whether Grambling's program serves the needs of other states. Other supporting information provided by both NWSU and the Louisiana State Board of Nursing indicate that Family Nurse Practitioner is a versatile program which allows graduates to function effectively with pediatric patients, but offers a wider range of practice to accommodate interest and available opportunities. This may be the reason why PNP programs have difficulty in attracting significant numbers of students. There was also speculation that lack of PNP positions steers some students into the FNP component of a master's program. Lastly, the staff agrees that it is possible that more PNP positions will develop once qualified graduates are expected to be available. So, while the staff concludes that this proposal should be given a chance to succeed, the staff perceives it necessary to monitor the enrollment in Northwestern's existing PNP program to ensure that the implementation of Grambling's new PNP program does not produce an undue adverse effect on NWSU's program.

Enrollment projections appear reasonable, but 100% graduation rate may be optimistic. Faculty, library resources, facilities, equipment, administrative structure and finances are all present to support the PNP program. As no additional resources are required for implementation, the staff recommends conditional approval with reporting of numbers of students and graduates until the PNP program is part of the next NLNAC accreditation review in 2012. As the issue of unnecessary duplication is unresolved, details of employment of graduates should also be included in annual progress reports.

As a last observation, given the widespread need for trained PNPs, the staff is curious why neither Northwestern nor Grambling have pursued an on-line version of this option

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

***The staff recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee grant conditional approval for the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner option of the Master of Science in Nursing (CIP***

*Code 511609) at Grambling State University, effective Fall 2008.*

- 1. By August 1, 2009, and annually on that date until the program has been reviewed by NLNAC, the University shall submit to the Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs a progress report documenting the numbers of students enrolled in and graduated from the program as well as the disposition of the graduates.*
- 2. Concurrently, the staff shall monitor student enrollment/graduation in the PNP program at Northwestern to help determine whether north Louisiana can maintain two such programs at adequate levels of student participation and production.*